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FOR EUR/CARC AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/23/2018

TAGS: KDEM OSCE PREL PHUM

SUBJECT: OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING DEMARCHE-AZERBAIJAN

REF: SECSTATE 76294

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Don Lu for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Per reftel request, PolOff delivered USG concerns and comments to Zaur Ahmadov, Human Rights Attaché at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

¶2. (C) Ahmadov thanked the Embassy for the points, describing the non-paper as "a very good paper," and offered comments on a number of the issues raised. He expects Azerbaijan to send a large delegation to the HDIM, which will be headed by someone from the Presidential Administration and will include members of various ministries as appropriate to the agenda items. He also expects NGOs from Azerbaijan to travel to the meeting.

¶3. (C) On the point regarding invitations to international election observers, Ahmadov explained that he foresees no problems in issuing these invitations. The Central Election Commission will identify the organizations to be invited, and the MFA will then issue the letters by the beginning of August. On PolOff's request, his office has sent a letter to the CEC asking specifically about an invitation for the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO), but has not yet received a reply. Regarding the domestic NGO Election Monitoring Center (EMC), however, Ahmadov explained that he discussed the situation with his colleague at the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and sees "no hope" for EMC to be re-registered prior to October's presidential election, as the MOJ says EMC committed serious violations on its registration documents. Ahmadov also sees "no hope" for the imprisoned journalists Eynulla Faytullayev, Sakit Zakhidov, and Genimet Zakhidov to be released prior to the HDIM.

¶4. (C) Overall, Ahmadov promised to write to the relevant state ministries regarding all of the points raised. He stated that he knows these issues damage the image of Azerbaijan in the rest of the world, but that "other ministries do not understand" and emphasized that the MFA has little influence over these concerns.

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